Government of Saskatchewan

Annual Report 2000-2001

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development

102-00271

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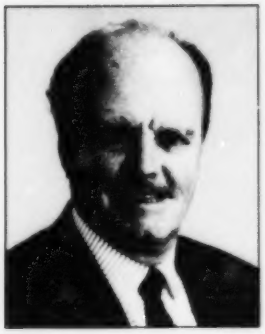
Letters of Transmittal

The Honourable Lynda Haverstock
Lieutenant-Governor
Province of Saskatchewan

May it please Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report of Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2001.

Eldon Lautermilch
Minister of Economic and
Co-operative Development



The Honourable Eldon Lautermilch
Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development

Dear Sir:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2001.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Spannier
Deputy Minister

The Saskatchewan Economy

The Saskatchewan economy experienced robust growth in 2000 due mainly to favourable market conditions in the United States and Canada and higher prices for energy products. According to the Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics, the province's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 4.6 per cent in 2000 - the eighth consecutive year of positive growth.

There were 485,000 people employed in Saskatchewan in 2000. This was an increase of 4,900 from 1999 and an increase of 36,500 from 1992. This was also the highest level of employment on record. The province's unemployment rate dropped from 6.1 per cent in 1999 to 5.2 per cent in 2000, the third lowest in the nation.

Saskatchewan's population as of July 1, 2000 was estimated to be 1,023,636 persons. This is a decrease of 2,084 persons (0.2 per cent) from July 1, 1999. The two major factors that contribute to the change in population levels in the province are the natural rate of population change (births minus deaths) and the inter-provincial migration patterns. In the period July 1, 1999 to July 1, 2000, for Saskatchewan, the migration changes outweighed the natural increase in population. Even with the slight population drop, Saskatchewan's total population has increased by 16,521 over the decade, from 1,007,115 in 1990 to 1,023,636 in 2000.

Saskatchewan's economy is linked to the global market and international trade is a vital part of the province's economic activity. In 2000, Saskatchewan's international exports increased significantly. Exports in 2000 totalled almost $13 billion, a 32 per cent increase over the level observed in 1999. The major contributor to this increase was the mining and energy sector, where exports in 2000 increased by 64 per cent to almost $6 billion. The export of manufactured goods also increased considerably, rising by 24.2 per cent to $3.1 billion.

Saskatchewan's manufacturing sector has a growing presence in the provincial economy and is leading to increased value-added economic activity. In 2000, the value of manufacturing shipments increased by 13.9 per cent to $7.5 billion, compared to 1999. The following industries reported particularly strong results in 2000: chemical and chemical products, metal fabrication, machinery, transportation equipment and electrical products.

Retail sales grew strongly in 2000, exceeding $8.1 billion, an increase of 5.1 per cent over 1999. Consumer spending on goods such as general merchandise, household furniture, gasoline, auto parts and other retail goods showed considerable strength.

New capital spending by private and public organizations in Saskatchewan exceeded $6.1 billion in 2000. This marked the fourth consecutive year in which capital expenditures in Saskatchewan exceeded $6 billion. Private and public expenditures in 2000 were slightly behind the 1999 total ($6.4 billion) but were $2.1 billion more than in 1992.

Most independent forecasters remain confident in their outlook for Saskatchewan and expect the economy to show further growth in the years ahead. In spring 2001, the Conference Board of Canada anticipated Saskatchewan's economy would grow by 2.5 per cent in 2001 and 2.9 per cent in 2002.

Department Overview

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development has as its corporate vision an innovative, prosperous and sustainable Saskatchewan economy with full participation. The department is the lead provincial government agency to spur economic growth, but is not the only department involved in economic development. It thus has a twofold role: to offer direct programs and services to individuals and businesses, and to play a role in co-ordinating economic development activities among other departments and agencies.

The department has five broad strategic goals. They are:

- To foster an innovative and knowledge-based economy.
- To maximize employment opportunities, specifically in priority sectors, among Aboriginal people, and through stronger community and regional economies.
- To foster a positive environment for businesses and co-operatives.
- To foster a positive attitude about Saskatchewan's economy.
- To be an employer of choice (internal goal).

The department underwent a minor reorganization in the fall of the reporting period, marshalling resources to better implement a new provincial economic development strategy as well as support the department's strategic goals. The reorganization involved some shifting of branches and units to different divisions and addition of resources to the Information Technology Office and the Marketing and Corporate Resources Division to help the department better deliver electronic government, electronic commerce and business promotion initiatives.

The department continued to lead the development of Saskatchewan's new economic strategy. This major cross-government initiative involved considerable analyses of economic challenges and opportunities plus extensive liaison with Saskatchewan organizations with a stake in economic development. In September 2000 the department released the consultation document, *Partnership for Prosperity: A Strategy for Success in the New Economy*. It then received input on a new strategy from more than 10,000 Saskatchewan people through public and stakeholder meetings, written submissions, phone calls and Web site responses. At the end of the fiscal year, staff was incorporating the stakeholder input into a final document, which would be released in June 2001.

Co-operative development continued to be a priority of the department. During the fiscal year, it assisted in the establishment of 28 new co-operatives, including three new generation co-operatives. Legislation allowing for the establishment of new generation co-operatives had been proclaimed in the previous fiscal year, and staff worked with a number of producer groups eager to use this new co-operative structure for value-added processing projects.

During the reporting period, the department introduced the Innovation and Science Fund to help strengthen Saskatchewan's research and development infrastructure. The fund provides matching dollars for various federally supported research projects at Saskatchewan universities, colleges and research institutes. More than $10 million was provided in support of such projects and special university research positions ("chairs").

The department oversees the government's interests in the Canada Light Source synchrotron, which at $174 million is the nation's largest scientific project in a generation. During the fiscal year, the building that will house the football-field-size facility was completed on the University of Saskatchewan campus. The synchrotron will begin operations in 2003.

Other department highlights in 2000-01 included:

- making more than $5 million in commitments under the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA) to 12 projects covering such diverse activities as a greenhouse gas technology centre and a new e-commerce Web site for Tourism Saskatoon (the first project funded under the WEPA, the Petroleum Technology Research Centre, was officially opened during the year).
- providing $5.9 million in support under the Strategic Investment Fund to research projects that will create new technologies, new products, new business opportunities and new economic activities.
- providing $4.3 million in loans to 598 clients through the Small Business Loans Association Program. This funding assisted in creating 247 new businesses and facilitated the expansion of another 349 businesses. Over 570 jobs were created and 640 jobs were maintained.
- undertaking various information technology and government online projects, including developing an e-government strategy and laying the groundwork for introduction of CommunityNet, an initiative that will provide high-speed Internet access to public institutions across the province.
- participating with Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs and other departments in development of the Framework for Co-operation, a strategy for Métis and Off-Reserve First Nations people.
- administering a very successful Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation (LSVCC) Program, under which 15 employee funds, two provincial pool funds and three national pool funds were operating in 2000-01.
- nominating 44 skilled workers and four business applicants under the Provincial Nominee (immigration) Program.
- co-ordinating another successful *Connectivity* conference, which brought together representatives from Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs), Community Futures Development Corporations, and the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association.
- undertaking targeted marketing campaigns in support of key economic sectors and economic strategy consultations, and laying the groundwork for a business confidence campaign profiling successful Saskatchewan businesses and involving private sector partners.
- continuing to make substantial progress in advancing the government's regulatory reform targets of eliminating duplicate and redundant regulations and ensuring periodic review to ensure relevancy of current regulations.

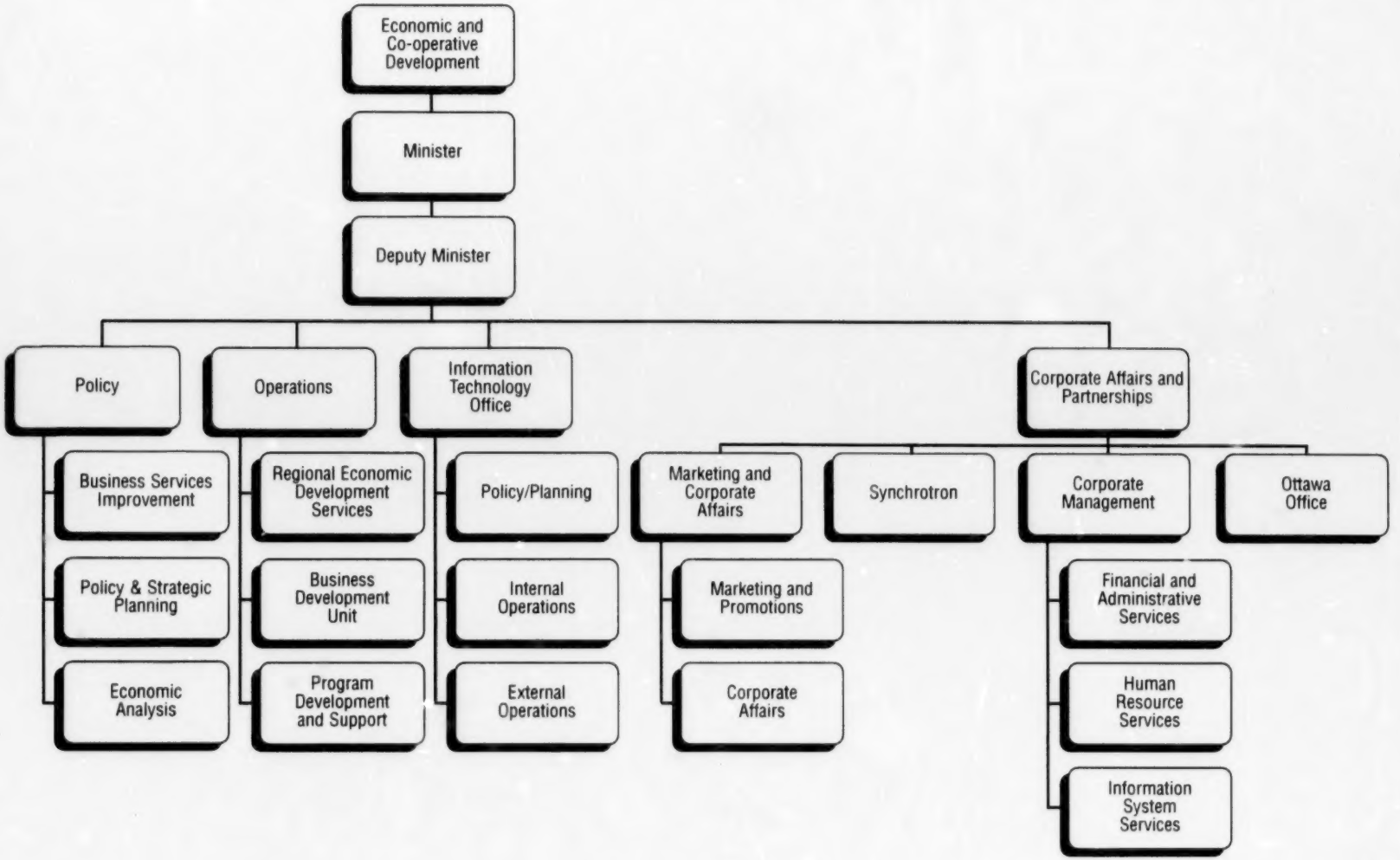
2001-02 Strategic Objectives

- Facilitate the conversion to e-government practices.
- Increase research and development and technology commercialization.
- Increase the adoption of new technologies and industry "best practices."
- Increase Aboriginal people's economic opportunities and participation.
- Increase employment in Saskatchewan's priority economic sectors.
- Contribute to building stronger community and regional economies.
- Facilitate business and co-operative growth.
- Decrease regulatory barriers to economic and business growth.
- Improve access to capital for business.
- Increase entrepreneurship, through increased promotion, collaboration with other economic partners and various communications activities aimed at young people.
- Facilitate accurate and timely reporting of government-wide economic activity within government.
- Improve the perception within the province of Saskatchewan as a place of opportunity.
- Foster a positive awareness of Saskatchewan outside the province.
- Ensure the department has an effective organization to serve its clients.

Mission Statement

To grow and diversify the Saskatchewan economy by building on our existing strengths.

Internal Organization as of March 31, 2000



Organization by Function

The department entered the 2000-01 fiscal year with a relatively flat organizational structure aligned to support key economic sectors and provincial economic directions. In September some minor organizational adjustments were made to allow the department to move forward in implementing a new economic strategy and addressing overall department strategic planning. These adjustments resulted in four divisions, one branch and one central office reporting directly to the deputy minister.

Policy Division

The division provides services and information in policy and program development, economic information production and presentation, inter-agency and interdepartmental relations, and monitoring and co-ordinating key provincial and departmental issues. The major focus of the division continued to be development of a new economic strategy. This task involved much cross-functional work with other departments and agencies and considerable liaison with the government's economic stakeholders.

Community Economic and Business Development Division

This division is responsible for the delivery of department programs and services that encourage the growth of businesses and co-operatives. Formerly known as Operations, the division changed its name to better reflect its main function. Responsibility for the government's Ottawa office was transferred to the division during the course of the year from the former Corporate Affairs and Partnerships Division.

Strategic Initiatives Branch

A new Strategic Initiatives Branch was created and was fully staffed by the fall of the reporting period. The branch deals with high-priority economic projects in key sectors that require highly focused activity and negotiations with senior government and industry representatives. Examples of the projects the branch undertook were initiatives related to the expansion of the forest industry and the government's involvement in the synchrotron.

Investment and Corporate Services Division

This division co-ordinates the work of most of the department's service areas, and comprises a number of branches from the former Corporate Affairs and Partnerships Division and the former Program Development and Support Branch. Its branches include: Investment Services, Economic Investments, Financial and Administrative Services, and Information System Services.

Information Technology Office

The Information Technology Office (ITO) has a central role of promoting electronic government and electronic commerce. Staff members work in two areas: information management and technology, and policy and planning/telecommunications. During the year the ITO added resources to help co-ordinate the government online and CommunityNet initiatives as well as deal with electronic privacy and security concerns.

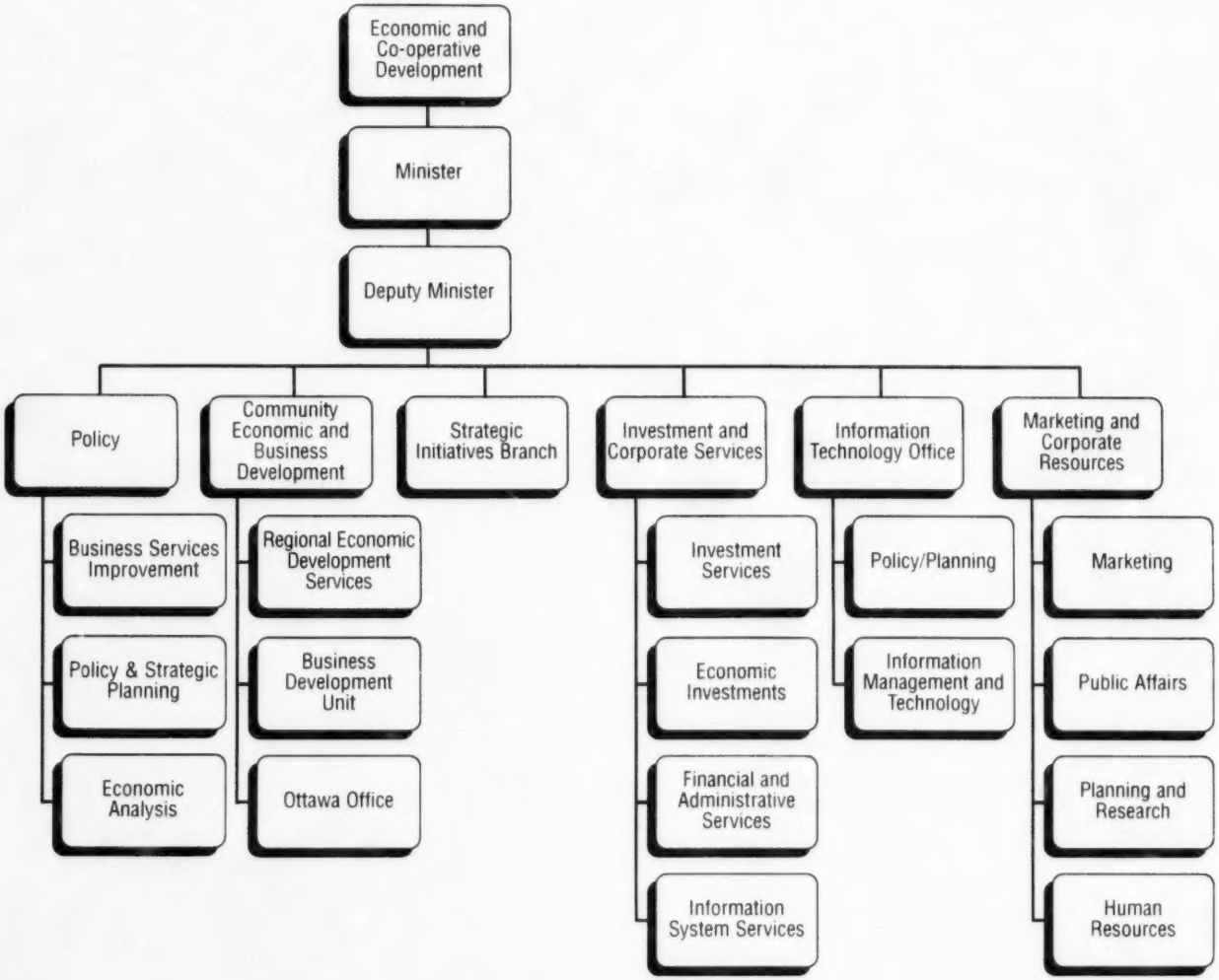
Marketing and Corporate Resources Division

This division includes several branches from the former Corporate Affairs and Partnerships Division. It provides strategic communications and human resource management services for the department. The department's former Marketing and Promotions and Corporate Affairs Units became the Marketing and Public Affairs Branches, and a small Planning and Research Branch was created, with primary responsibility for co-ordinating departmental strategic planning. There were no changes to the Human Resources Branch during the course of the year.

Other Organizations Funded Through the Department Vote

The provincial government provides funding for other government-related economic development activities through the department's budget vote. In 2000-01, government and government-industry agencies receiving funds through this vote included: Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation (SOCO), Tourism Saskatchewan, the Office of Northern Affairs and the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP). The amounts provided to these agencies are noted under the Financial Report contained in this document.

Internal Organization as of March 31, 2001



Policy Division

The role of the Policy Division is to develop economic policies for the department and the government. The division also provides the department and its minister with timely policy and planning services and economic information.

At the end of 2000-01, Policy consisted of three branches: Economic Analysis, Policy and Strategic Planning, and Business Services Improvement.

Services and Activities

The Policy Division provides services and information in the following main categories:

- policy and program development;
- economic information production and presentation;
- inter-agency and interdepartmental relations;
- federal/provincial relations; and
- monitoring and co-ordination of key provincial and departmental issues.

Policy and Program Development

Co-ordinating the development of a new provincial economic strategy – *Partnership for Prosperity* – was a primary focus of the division during the reporting period.

Policy Division led the strategy work on behalf of the department, reporting to a Steering Committee comprising the Deputy Minister to the Premier, the Deputy Minister of Finance, the Deputy Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development, and the President and Chief Executive Officer of Crown Investments Corporation.

Building upon previous provincial strategies, the department identified a vision for the future, principles, goals and targets through discussions with other government departments, businesses, labour and community organizations. A consultation document, *Partnership for Prosperity: A Strategy for Success in the New Economy*, was released at a public launch in September 2000.

Extensive public and stakeholder consultations were held between September and December 2000. About 2,000 people attended consultation meetings held in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, North Battleford, Swift Current, Yorkton, La Ronge and Creighton.

Over 10,000 people received the document or accessed the government's Web site to review the consultation document and offer comments. About 400,000 strategy summaries were included in newspapers, and more than 5,000 people completed and returned written comments or responded to telephone surveys.

In addition, specific consultations were undertaken with stakeholder groups representing businesses, co-operatives, labour unions, Aboriginal people, other levels of government, and other partners in community and economic development. Briefs were received from organizations representing several thousand members.

Integration of social and economic development featured prominently in the development of the economic strategy. Officials across government identified specific objectives and actions to support economic and social prosperity for Saskatchewan people, businesses and co-operatives, and communities. A related effort established specific targets and a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure progress in achieving goals.

The 19 targets proposed a variety of economic increases, including: youth and Aboriginal employment rates, personal disposable income, establishment of businesses and co-operatives, accessibility to high-speed Internet service, investment in research and development, value-added exports, and agri-value processing.

Officials participated in a number of interdepartmental analyses of issues affecting economic development policy and issues related to tourism and northern development in Saskatchewan.

The Provincial Action Committee on the Economy (PACE) was formally concluded during the fiscal year. Other avenues to gather business views and exchange perspectives are becoming available to government, including several industry-led organizations and associations that identify opportunities to increase the competitiveness of Saskatchewan's key sectors.

During the fiscal year, the division completed analyses of more than 20 industry sectors as part of the work to develop *Partnership for Prosperity*. This work contributed to an updated assessment of Saskatchewan's competitive advantages and identified areas of strategic importance to provincial economic development. Efforts to attract

new investment to Saskatchewan are assisted by these analyses.

Aboriginal economic development is a component of *Partnership for Prosperity* and a key element of future economic development success in Saskatchewan. The Policy Division, in conjunction with Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs and other departments, has prepared the *Strategy for Métis and Off-Reserve First Nations People (Framework for Cooperation)*, which seeks to reduce social and economic gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The division also worked with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, as well as officials of the federal government, to identify opportunities to meet the provincial challenge of ensuring full participation by all people in a growing economy.

The division continued to contribute to the development, analysis and implementation of co-operatives policy during the reporting period. The division assisted in development of a guide for starting co-operatives. The division also worked with proponents of New Generation Co-operatives explaining the features of the legal framework and governance rules, which offers new capitalization mechanisms, such as access to non-member capital and availability of non par value shares.

Economic Information Production and Presentation

The division provided economic information and assessment to support departmental decision-making. Staff prepared monthly labour force reports, reports on economic indicators and forecasts, and a variety of other analyses on specific aspects of the economy and labour market. They continued to analyze economic trends in support of the economic strategy.

Division staff worked with other government agencies to prepare statistical information on small businesses and make projections of demographic and labour market trends. Staff also responded to requests for economic information from other government agencies and the general public.

Policy arranged for Saskatchewan to participate with other levels of government in an update to KPMG Consulting's 1999 study comparing the costs of doing business in Canada, the U.S. and other countries. KPMG is expected to complete the data collection and report preparation by the end of 2001. The department intends to use KPMG's competitiveness model to carry out more specific and more customized analyses of Saskatchewan's business costs relative to other jurisdictions.

The division began exploring, along with the Regional Economic Development Services Branch, the possibility of developing a set of consistent, electronic-based community and regional profiles, which would incorporate map-based information using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The information would be of assistance for investment attraction, business development and retention, and opportunity identification. Potential partners and funding sources are currently being sought for the initiative, which could take up to 18-24 months to develop.

Federal-Provincial Relations

The division works with federal departments and other provinces to identify and advance the economic development of Saskatchewan, and also participates in a number of federal-provincial working groups in such areas as small business, innovation, investment and labour market information.

Division officials continued work with their federal, provincial and territorial counterparts in support of innovation and commercialization of research in the west through the Senior Officials Group on Innovation. At the Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister levels, co-ordination of economic development efforts across the west was begun.

During the year, work continued with the Office of Northern Affairs, Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs and Executive Council on a federal-provincial agreement on northern development. As well, Policy worked with Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training toward a research and development policy framework.

Policy's responsibility for the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA) ended during the reporting period; however, division staff assisted in the review of some WEPA proposals.

In partnership with Western Economic Diversification Canada and Tourism Saskatchewan, Policy Division completed a strategic framework for tourism development. The initiative involved consultations with the tourism industry and research to determine priorities for public sector investment to maximize growth of Saskatchewan's tourism industry.

Policy Division staff co-ordinated the department's input into the 2000 Western and Annual Premiers' Conferences and preparations for meetings of federal-provincial-territorial ministers and deputy ministers responsible for industry, science and technology, tourism and trade. The division also handled the

department's preparations for the meeting of western economic development ministers held in Yellowknife in September 2000.

The division continued to represent Saskatchewan on the Working Group on Investment (WGI), established under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). The group pursued its responsibilities as required by the Investment Chapter of the AIT, and refined its proposals for clarifying and improving the Code of Conduct on Incentives, as requested by internal trade ministers in April 2000.

Monitoring and Co-ordination of Key Provincial and Departmental Issues

Regulatory Reform and Addressing Business Irritants

The 2000-01 fiscal year marks the fifth year since the Regulatory Reform Initiative commenced its activities. The government remains poised to achieve its objective of reducing the number of regulations by 25 per cent within the initiative's 10-year mandate. However, reducing the number of regulations is not the most important aspect of this initiative. The main objective of the initiative is to achieve better regulation by making it easier and less costly for business and others who have to comply with government regulations without reducing the protection and safety to the general public. The aim is to create a pro-growth regulatory environment in the province.

Overall, the department's Business Services Improvement Branch (BSIB) is getting closer to achieving the 25 per cent target. Since the introduction of the initiative in May 1996, there has been a 21.2 per cent reduction in the number of regulations. Achieving the 25 per cent reduction target will mean strict adherence to a zero sum policy. Since the start of the initiative, the number of regulations repealed exceeded the number of regulations enacted by 172 regulations.

Regulatory reduction is closely tied to the concept of regulatory review. Government officials continue to review a wide array of regulations, often leading to consolidation and streamlining of the regulatory environment, as well as repeal of outdated or unnecessary regulations. As of March 31, 2001, there remained to be reviewed 251, or 31 per cent, of the current regulations that existed in May 1996.

In the summer of 1999, Cabinet instructed the Business Services Improvement Branch to develop Principles of Good Regulations to guide officials in their required review of existing regulations and in the development of new regulations or amendments. All government departments and Crown corporations were required to consult with the branch in the development of new regulations or amendments.

During 2000-01, the branch implemented the Principles of Good Regulations. Departments and Crown corporations applied the principles in their regulatory review during 2000-01 and are filing documented reviews of existing regulations to the BSIB. The branch continues to scrutinize the majority of the new regulations being introduced.

The branch initiated and launched a strategy to increase awareness of its services and mandate among the Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs), chambers of commerce, industry associations, government departments and Crown corporations, and the Office of the Ombudsman. The objective was to seek assistance in identifying red tape and paper burden irritants of small- and medium-sized business.

In order to implement the awareness strategy, the branch initiated and completed the following activities during 2000-01:

- Consulted with all government departments and Crown corporations in order to identify the branches within the departments and the Crowns that can assist the BSIB in achieving its objectives.
- Worked in partnership with Saskatchewan Finance to mail an insert entitled "Developing Saskatchewan Businesses" to 45,000 businesses along with their tax returns.
- Sent letters to industry associations and REDAs to inform them about the BSIB's mandate. Included with each letter was a "Did You Know" fact sheet about the branch.

Industry associations, REDAs, government departments and Crown corporations responded positively to the awareness strategy and to the branch's mandate to reduce red tape and paper burden irritants for business. The branch was invited to make presentations to many of these groups throughout the province. In total, 23 presentations were made during 2000-01.

In addition, industry associations invited the BSIB to place articles regarding the branch's services in their publications, enabling the branch to communicate its message to association members across the province. An article was also placed in internal provincial government publications.

The awareness strategy achieved its objectives by:

- identifying a total of 53 red tape and paper burden irritants across the province, representing 80 per cent of the total 66 business irritants that were identified and addressed during 2000-01;
- sending a message across the province and within government departments and Crown corporations that the branch is available to help businesses deal with red tape and paper burden irritants;
- increasing the BSIB's visibility and credibility across the province and within government departments and Crown corporations;
- demonstrating to businesses that government is prepared to address the regulatory concerns of small- and medium-sized business;
- building partnerships with REDAs, chambers of commerce, industry associations, and government departments and Crown corporations; and
- positioning the BSIB as a point of contact for business with government red tape and paper burden concerns.

During 2000-01, the branch continued to co-ordinate and consult with government departments and Crown corporations in resolving identified red tape and paper burden irritants of small- and medium-sized business. The branch worked and consulted with 48 businesses and associations during the fiscal year.

Business irritants ranged from a concern relating to the purchase of Crown land to delays in registering a co-operative. As a result of the concern related to registering a co-operative, the BSIB determined that there was a lack of pertinent information for incorporating co-operatives. Subsequently, in consultation with Saskatchewan Justice and the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, the BSIB developed extensive resource material relating to New Generation Co-operatives, including:

- a name search guide;
- an articles of incorporation guide;
- development of bylaws guide;
- document filing processes;
- ongoing filing requirements; and
- an information bulletin on key regulatory issues facing New Generation Co-operatives.

A major initiative in 2000-01 involved co-ordinating an extensive review of the regulatory approval process for oil and gas exploration and development in Saskatchewan. The review was undertaken with the four major provincial regulators of oil and gas developments: the Departments of Energy and Mines, Environment and Resource Management, Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Agriculture and Food.

The branch prepared an extensive document and various information bulletins that outline and explain the provincial and municipal approval process for oil and gas projects in Saskatchewan. This information was posted on the department's Web site and the BSIB co-ordinated the establishment of Web links with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the four provincial regulators.

Another major initiative undertaken by the BSIB during 2000-01 was a review of all the provincial acts and regulations containing stipulations on the length of time that a business may be required to maintain financial records. As a result of this review, and in co-operation with all those affected provincial regulatory authorities, the branch introduced a provincial policy that will see a provincial standard established for business record retention periods.

The BSIB also developed informational bulletins for 19 different types of businesses. The bulletins were developed in partnership with other government departments and Crown corporations. The bulletins outline provincial regulatory requirements, including a government contact person name and telephone number, for the specific line of business.

The information bulletins were posted on the department's Web site, and links were established with the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre. The bulletins were also forwarded to the department's regional offices, REDAs and Community Futures Development Corporations.

In late 2000-01, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and the Electrical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan (ECAS) approached the BSIB to initiate a review of SaskPower's electrical inspections under *The Electrical Inspections Act, 1993* and *The Electrical Inspection Regulations*.

Work also continued on concerns raised by ECAS regarding restricted electrical licences. The BSIB facilitated discussions for Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs and Housing and ECAS to review these licenses. A final report on this initiative will be completed by the end of May 2001.

During 2000-01, the BSIB was actively involved in developing the *Partnership for Prosperity* economic strategy, especially as it relates to the Regulatory Reform Initiative. The BSIB profiled the regulatory environment for some 22 business sectors.

2001-02 Division Objectives

- Provide economic information, analysis and advice in support of departmental objectives and priorities, particularly those relating to investment prospecting, competitiveness, community and business development, and which support measurement of departmental and provincial successes in achieving stated goals.
- Implement a renewed economic development strategy for the province, co-ordinating related strategic activities and building on sectoral opportunities.
- Undertake strategies and activities supporting a sectoral approach to economic development and job creation.
- Negotiate and implement new federal-provincial economic initiatives that provide mutual benefits and emphasize collaboration.
- Advance collaborative approaches in economic development with other departments, agencies, governments, the business community and economic stakeholders, particularly in policy areas relating to community and regional economic development, co-operatives, taxation, transportation, research and development, Aboriginal economic development, trade and investment.
- Work with the federal government, educational institutions, the private sector and the provincial government to describe provincial strengths in order to advance Saskatchewan as a centre of research excellence in key sectors, as well as increase Saskatchewan's overall research and development activity leading to innovation and commercialization of research.
- Form partnerships with First Nations and Métis organizations as well as the federal government to build on the proposed Aboriginal economic development strategy.
- Work with partners in provincial, local and federal bodies to develop strategies for the promotion of Saskatchewan as a preferred place to live, work, visit and invest.

2001-02 Objectives – Regulatory Reform

In 2001-02, the Business Services Improvement Branch will continue its participation and leadership in ensuring a pro-growth regulatory environment is established in the province. Specifically, the BSIB will continue to:

- ensure that all provincial departments and Crown corporations review their regulations within the established timeframe of the initiative;
- monitor the growth and reduction of regulations;
- identify redundant regulations for inclusion in past repeals;
- implement its awareness strategy in order to maintain constructive dialogue with businesses and their associations in an ongoing effort to identify and resolve their red tape and paper burden irritants;
- develop more regulatory information bulletins in partnership with other government departments and Crown corporations; and
- facilitate the review of SaskPower's electrical inspections under *The Electrical Inspection Act, 1993*, and *The Electrical Inspection Regulations*.

For more information, contact:

Policy Division
Saskatchewan Economic and
Co-operative Development
1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, SK S4P 3V7

Telephone: (306) 787-6717
Facsimile: (306) 787-2198

Community Economic and Business Development Division

The Community Economic and Business Development Division is responsible for the delivery of department programs and services that encourage the growth of businesses and co-operatives. It accomplishes this through three branches or units:

- the Regional Economic Development Services Branch, which comprises eight regional offices and provides development and support services to businesses, co-operatives and regional economic development authorities (REDAs);
- the Business Development Unit, which works with growth firms and sectors, and helps co-ordinate government investment attraction initiatives; and
- the Ottawa Office, which works to increase Saskatchewan's share of the federal procurement market.

Regional Economic Development Services Branch

The Regional Economic Development Services Branch provides business and co-operative development support through assessment, information, pathfinding and referral services. The branch encourages job creation by Saskatchewan's business community by co-ordinating and delivering a comprehensive small business support system in partnership with the public and private sectors. The branch also works with community leaders to support and strengthen community economic development in the province.

Services are delivered through eight regional offices located in Estevan, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current and Yorkton.

During the fiscal year, the branch was responsible for:

- providing and managing services for business development, co-operative development and community economic development;
- assessing the needs of value-added client business and matching those needs with suppliers of business programs and services;
- supporting the development of Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs) and assisting them in increasing their service capacity;
- supporting the development of Neighbourhood Development Organizations (NDOs) and assisting them in developing the services and infrastructure in their inner-city neighbourhoods;
- undertaking co-operative sector relations and liaison, co-operative development and diversification projects, co-operative models for community development and community economic development, and monitoring the legislative and regulatory environment affecting co-operatives; and
- supporting the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC), a federal-provincial partnership, in its efforts to provide a "single window" information service to Saskatchewan businesses.

Branch achievements are grouped into six categories: information and services, small and medium enterprises, partnerships, regional economic development authorities, neighbourhood development organizations, and co-operative and community economic development.

Information and Services

One of the branch's goals is to ensure that information, assessment and pathfinding services are provided to support small business and co-operative development in the province.

During 2000-01, the branch handled 14,331 requests for business and co-operative information and assistance. It also continued to develop, update and distribute small business information, directories and databases. These include a series of 84 business and co-operative "how to" resource materials handouts, 48 Kinds-of-Business resources, a cash flow planning model, the *Directory of Business Associations*, the *Inventory of Programs and Services for Entrepreneurs*, the *Growing from Within* video, the regional services brochure, and the *New Generation Co-operatives Development Guide* and brochure. Newly developed resources included the *Co-operative Directors Handbook* and a resource listing of *Enterprise Centres in Saskatchewan*.

Small and Medium Enterprises

Another major branch activity is working with value-added small and medium enterprises (SMEs), ranking them in terms of growth potential and providing assistance as required. Each regional office is responsible for a specific area of the province. During the fiscal year, regional staff maintained regular contact with local businesses, helped identify firms with growth potential, and assessed their needs to determine what help they required from the department or other sources.

Partnerships

The branch works to identify partners and assist them in leveraging resources and pursuing opportunities that enhance wealth and job creation. The branch encourages partners to provide business training and education and to assist in the development of economic development groups and REDAs.

A "single window" approach to business information depends on partnerships with other agencies involved in economic development. An infrastructure of such agencies has been developed and includes provincial and federal departments, business associations, REDAs and various community economic development organizations, selected chambers of commerce, banks and credit unions. There are more than 250 of these partnership arrangements, with partners acting as distribution points for small business information.

Working with partner organizations, branch staff provided resources and expertise to various training programs, such as seminars and classroom instruction on starting a business and cash flow model training. Staff served on a number of boards and committees for youth entrepreneurship, business development and training initiatives. These initiatives included the University of Saskatchewan Internship Program, Regina Mentor Program, Saskatoon Junior Chamber of Commerce, Southeast Regional Youth Needs Assessment Initiative, and the Swift Current Youth Transition Committee, to name a few. Staff also helped in the development of business enterprise centres, including the co-location of department offices within those centres.

Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre

One of the branch's main partnership activities is the seven-year-old Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC), jointly funded and managed by the department and the federal government. The Saskatoon-based centre supports Saskatchewan business development and entrepreneurial processes. As the hub of the "single window" network, the centre provides user-friendly information to aid business decisions, as well as information on government programs and services.

The centre handled 14,354 requests for business information. It also provided information through its Web site, fax-on-demand system, promotional efforts at trade shows, and presentations and tours of the CSBSC.

During the reporting period, the CSBSC continued to work on its regionalization initiative to improve delivery of services in locations outside Saskatoon. Regionalization involves the creation of a network of regional or satellite offices to extend centre services and make information and walk-in services readily available in smaller communities. Sixteen regional sites have been launched and agreements have been signed. These regional sites are located in Regina (two sites), Broadview, Estevan, Weyburn, Prince Albert, Tisdale, Swift Current, Yorkton, North Battleford, Meadow Lake, Assiniboia, Bruno, Outlook, Kindersley and La Ronge.

Work proceeded on the development of an Aboriginal Business Service Network (ABSN). The ABSN initiative is intended to build on the structure of existing business service centres located across the country that provide free-of-charge access to information on business programs, services and regulations. These resources are to be tailored to meet the unique requirements of Aboriginal clients.

The ABSN initiative is designed to enhance the development of Aboriginal businesses by increasing the availability of business-related information for Aboriginal entrepreneurs. The increased availability of business information, provided through Aboriginal organizations in partnership with the CSBSC, could lead to an increased level of comfort for Aboriginal clients in accessing this information, and ultimately to an increased level of business development and entrepreneurship.

Regional Enterprise Centres

The branch provided support to the development of regional business enterprise centres, including co-location in communities where there are regional offices of the department. These "single window" centres are being developed as a means to co-ordinate services to assist entrepreneurship and small business development to help their local economies grow and create jobs.

These initiatives are examples of innovative partnerships among local, regional, provincial and federal organizations. They are excellent examples of the current focus on grassroots economic development at the regional level and have been developed in conjunction with REDAs.

Several regions have established enterprise centres to provide assistance to people starting or expanding small business. Partners include REDAs, federally supported Community Futures Development Corporations, department regional offices, chambers of commerce, Western Economic Diversification, Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan and tribal councils. The centres are regional access partner sites of the CSBSC. Centres have been established in Estevan, North Battleford, Regina, Swift Current and Yorkton. Three centres are developing in Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert. Several centres operate in rural Saskatchewan and are partnerships between REDAs and local communities.

Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs)

The REDA initiative was introduced in 1993 as a key government economic development initiative.

REDAs offer a co-ordinated, co-operative approach to provincial economic development. Membership consists of communities, rural municipalities, businesses, co-operatives and First Nations. Partners pool their resources to support job and wealth creation within their regions. At the end of 2000-01, 28 REDAs were operating in Saskatchewan.

The branch offers a range of organizational and professional services to existing and emerging REDAs, including services that increase their economic development capacity.

During the year, the branch provided a number of REDA resources and training tools, including:

- matching grant funding to the province's 28 REDAs, totalling $1,442,347.
- the REDA Enhancement Fund for projects that strengthen regional infrastructure and build economic development capacity; 17 REDAs received $246,284 of matching grant funding for 28 projects. In addition, funding was provided to 14 REDAs that partnered with one or more REDAs to undertake projects. Eight projects received total funding of $165,475.
- the REDA Youth Employment Initiative, which resulted in term employment on business projects for 22 youth in 17 REDAs. Total program funding for 2000-01 was $142,118.
- the REDA Board Governance Training program on the roles and responsibilities of board members in community economic development continued to be provided for training new board members.
- participants in training from Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI) completed their training and received their certification.
- the department contracted the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association (SEDA) to develop and deliver workshops regarding project management. The workshop attracted 185 community economic developers.

A highlight of the year was the *Connectivity* conference held February 14-16, 2001 and coinciding with *REDA Week in Saskatchewan*. The conference was jointly hosted by the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association (SEDA), Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) and the department. All 28 REDAs were represented. Evaluation indicated a successful conference with recommendations for continued collaboration and partnership.

REDA Activities in 2000-01

REDAs provided a variety of services to businesses and communities in their regions. REDAs also undertook economic development initiatives with the ongoing assistance of branch staff. Services are typically grouped into seven categories:

Co-ordination Services

REDAs co-ordinate the activities of various organizations within regions in order to achieve collaboration and synergy while reducing duplication. Examples include:

- co-ordinating with partner groups to deliver economic development services and training and form regional enterprise centres.

- regional marketing initiatives, such as developing Web pages, profiles, brochures and tourism activities for member communities and regions.
- trade shows, conferences, community events and various business promotions, including business awards events.
- projects such as intensive livestock operations, forestry, housing, grain terminals/elevator closures, employment services, air services, area transportation, regional waste and Internet access.
- regional business retention programs.
- funding applications and proposals for regional project work.

Organizational Development and Planning Services

REDAs help increase the capacity of economic development organizations within their areas. Examples include:

- accessing funding from the REDA Enhancement Fund. REDAs were able to purchase or upgrade computer equipment and software.
- participating in the Youth Employment Program, through which 17 REDAs hired 22 youth on work terms.
- planning and preparing for annual meetings, strategic planning sessions and joint REDA meetings, recruiting membership, formulating membership fees, soliciting private sector funding and supporting and establishing satellite offices in member communities.

Education and Training Services

REDAs ensure the presence of educational services to meet the needs of the regional business and economic development communities by:

- developing training needs assessments on a regional basis. For example, based on a regional needs assessment, develop and deliver specific workplace training, under contract with a regional college, to address labour shortages within a region.
- hosting and delivering training initiatives and seminars on such topics as project management, self-employment and entrepreneurship (often focusing on youth), business development, marketing, patenting, e-commerce, tourism and customer service, business opportunity assessment, financial planning and regulatory reform. These initiatives are often in partnership or on a contract basis with organizations like the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association, Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council, Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan, Human Resources Development Canada, regional colleges and Community Futures Development Corporations.
- participation by board members and staff in training opportunities from organizations such as the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association, Economic Developers Association of Canada and University of Waterloo economic development officer training.

Information Services

REDAs work to ensure entrepreneurs, businesses and other groups can access the information they require. Examples include:

- developing and maintaining resource libraries including print/electronic and audio/visual materials as well as Internet access. Many REDAs have partnered with other economic development service providers to form enterprise centres and regionalization sites of the CSBSC.
- assisting business clients with business planning, provision of business information, identifying opportunities and sourcing financial assistance.
- developing and maintaining Web sites, as well as administering and co-ordinating Community Access Program sites (public Internet access).
- developing and publishing regional demographic information, business listings, brochures, profiles, pamphlets and newsletters.

Research and Development Services

REDAs identify economic development and business opportunities within their regions by:

- researching and developing initiatives on a regional basis, such as value-added agriculture and processing, industry development and business retention, water supply and waste handling, area transportation, short line railways, housing shortages and tourism projects.
- providing research and development services to individual clients.
- conducting consumer market, labour market and training research, preparing feasibility and market opportunity studies and developing regional needs assessments.
- developing and maintaining databases of regional businesses/industry.

Promotion and Marketing Services

REDAs promote their regions for investment attraction and business retention purposes by:

- preparing for announcements and grand openings, designing letterhead and logos, developing presentations for marketing and soliciting new members.
- maintaining Web sites of communities, services, attractions and demographics to advertise and promote their region.
- promoting regional tourism.
- promoting local/regional businesses through events such as business awards and shop locally initiatives, as well as participating in and sponsoring trade shows (locally and out of province).
- participating in economic development organizations such as the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association, Saskatchewan Council for Community Development, Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan and tourism organizations.

Project Management Services

REDAs manage and implement specific regional projects and initiatives. Examples include:

- providing administration services, developing surveys and feasibility studies for groups such as forestry organizations, regional waste and transportation committees, new generation co-operatives, livestock producers and organizers of manufacturing projects.
- recruiting businesses and/or services such as lawyers and doctors.
- administering Small Business Loans Associations through the department's Small Business Loans Association Program.
- funding through the REDA Enhancement Fund, which enabled REDAs to carry out projects such as Web site and database development; business opportunities, retention, attraction and job-creation programs, and value-added agriculture and food processing feasibility studies.
- funding through the REDA Partnership Initiative, which allowed the undertaking of joint initiatives and projects by two or more REDAs. Examples included waste management, pulse cleaning and greenhouse facility feasibility studies, feedlot and intensive hog operation projects, development of a tourism action plan, an agri-business readiness study, and an internship program for university students to carry out research projects.

Neighbourhood Development Organizations (NDOs)

In August 1998, the Government of Saskatchewan launched the Neighbourhood Development Organization (NDO) program. The program provides organizational development assistance and funding to support the development and operation of multi-purpose organizations, by the residents of low-income neighbourhoods, to undertake community economic development activities. The program is jointly co-ordinated by the Departments of Economic and Co-operative Development and Social Services.

There are currently three Neighbourhood Development Organizations in Saskatchewan: Quint Development Corporation in Saskatoon, River Bank Development Corporation in Prince Albert, and Community Action Alliance of Regina Co-operative.

NDO Activities in 2000-2001

All three NDOs developed key initiatives relating to the improvement of housing in their communities, as well as supporting a variety of community-based business and co-operative development projects. In total, these NDOs have assisted over 135 families in home ownership. They have encouraged and supported the development of numerous co-operative ventures, including worker co-operatives for home renovations, day-care centres, a bulk food buyers co-op and a transportation co-op. They have also undertaken a number of employment and training initiatives to improve the social and economic well-being of their residents. Some examples include administering a Small Business Loans Association, start-up of a micro-loan fund, entrepreneurial training, on-the-job work experience programs, and home renovation and trades training. Each of the NDOs received core funding of $150,000. The department also provided some resources to a fourth NDO that is developing in North Battleford.

In addition, resources were provided to support individual NDO community initiatives. Quint evaluated its small business training program and assisted in the development of a non-profit, charitable organization that responds to the needs

of low-income groups and provides risk capital in the form of guarantees, loans or equity for community economic development. River Bank accessed the funding to hire a business development officer to oversee a number of its community economic development projects and to have a feasibility study conducted on the productivity and marketing of special forest products for a community-based venture. Community Action Alliance of Regina Co-operative developed a communications strategy and partnered with the Regina Regional Economic Development Authority on the hiring of a business development officer to undertake the development and implementation of the 11th Avenue Mosaic Street Market project, which will provide a venue for local merchants and community members to sell their wares, crafts and other merchandise.

Co-operative Development

The department's co-operative mandate is to promote and support the use of co-operative structures, principles and business practices to strengthen and enhance the province's economy and society. It is the basis for a partnership between the government and the co-operative sector.

The department undertook a number of initiatives and projects aimed at supporting the growth of the established co-operative sector and supporting the development of new co-operative enterprise. Activities were undertaken in six areas:

Co-operative Sector Relations and Liaison

Key activities focused on ensuring effective communication between the government and the co-operative sector on issues, programs and policies of mutual concern. Specific activity included:

- Ongoing liaison with the co-operative sector through non-voting membership on the Canadian Co-operative Association's (CCA) Saskatchewan Region Council.
- Funding and support for a joint initiative with CCA to increase participation by First Nations and inner-city youth in its Co-operative Youth Program.
- Maintaining liaison and support for the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives.
- Co-ordination of the Government/Co-operative Sector Senior Officials Working Committee and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool/Government Deputy Ministers Meeting.
- Development and approval of a plan to work with CCA at the national level in support of holding its Triennial Congress in Saskatoon in 2005.
- Ongoing liaison with federal, provincial and territorial officials responsible for co-operatives.
- Partnership with the Conseil de la Co-opération de la Saskatchewan in supporting its annual economic summit.

Co-operative Development and Diversification Projects

The department continued to promote and support the co-operative sector in undertaking major expansion and supporting new co-operative activity, including:

- liaison between Federated Co-operatives Limited and the government regarding planned expansion of Consumers' Co-operative Refinery Limited.
- continued support for the development of New Generation Co-operatives (NGCs) in the agri-value sector. This included the incorporation of three NGCs and support for 17 developing NGCs.

Development of New Co-operatives

In 2000-01, the department continued to increase support for promoting and developing new co-operatives. Co-operative development co-ordinators worked with more than 75 groups investigating establishing co-operatives. Twenty-eight new co-operatives were established.

The Co-operative Development Assistance Program provides funding to support developing and expanding co-operatives in activities related to organizational and business development. Five applicants were approved for funding of $42,500.

The department provided support for a pilot project for the development of NGCs in partnership with the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives and the Canadian Co-operative Association and funded by the national Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) program.

Co-operative Models for Community Development and Community Economic Development

The department provided support to the Action Committee on the Rural Economy (ACRE) in support of adoption of co-operative and community-based solutions for rural development.

The department continued to support the Saskatchewan Council for Community Development (SCCD) by representation on the council, support for its projects and activities, and provision of a $5,000 operating grant.

Resource Materials, Research and Promotion

The department developed and published a new Board of Directors Handbook to support the training and development activities of the more than 1,000 co-operative boards across Saskatchewan. In partnership with the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, the department initiated a project to develop a comprehensive series of resource materials to support the promotion and development of New Generation Co-operatives.

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development and Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food contracted Innovation Consulting Group to prepare *A Template for the Purchase of Wood Elevators*. The document was developed to assist individuals, groups and communities to assess the viability of purchasing wooden elevators that were for sale across the province.

The department sponsored and participated at the Agriculture Adaptation Forum sponsored by CCA in Saskatoon on November 27-28, 2000. This was one of a series of eight regional forums held across Canada. The department was invited to participate at the national forum held in Winnipeg in February 2001, which developed priorities for supporting agricultural co-operative development.

Financial support was provided to the Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation's annual meeting conference held in Regina November 3-5, 2000, which attracted about 75 members of worker co-operatives from across Canada. The key focus of the event was the discussion of strategies for implementing a $1.5-million national fund established to support the development of worker co-operatives in Canada.

Under the Co-operative Recognition Program, the department presented certificates to 75 co-operatives celebrating 25, 40, 50, 60, 75, 80 and 85 years of service to their communities.

Co-op Week was celebrated October 15-21, 2000. Department activities included: a Flag-Raising Ceremony at the Legislature, a luncheon co-sponsored with the Regina Co-operative Council, and a meeting between the Minister and the CCA Saskatchewan Region Council.

The highlight of Co-op Week was the Co-operative Merit Awards, an annual event co-sponsored with CCA that recognizes the achievements of co-operators around the province.

Monitoring the Legislative and Regulatory Environment Affecting Co-operatives

The department developed resource materials to enhance the understanding of both *The Co-operatives Act, 1996* and *The New Generation Co-operatives Act*. It also worked with the Co-operatives Securities Board, Saskatchewan Justice and representatives of the co-operative sector to review and develop recommendations on the membership, mandate and operation of the board.

2001-02 Branch Objectives

Build stronger communities and regional economies:

- Increase the capacity of REDAs to undertake business development by providing services and resources, including new business development tools and training initiatives for all REDA boards and professional staff.
- Provide services and resources to support the capacity of the new neighbourhood development organizations to undertake programming in inner-city neighbourhoods in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina and North Battleford.

Facilitate business and co-operative growth, and increase entrepreneurship:

- Ensure information, assessment and pathfinding services are provided to encourage and support business and co-operative development, retention and expansion.
- Promote the entrepreneurial option to the province's youth.
- Continue to support the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre, the federal-provincial "single window" information service to business, and the network of 16 CSBSC regional access partner sites.

- Increase Aboriginal people's economic opportunities and participation through the implementation of an Aboriginal Business Service Network initiative.
- Increase the adoption of new technologies and practices by communicating to the business community of trends and opportunities for technological innovation and advanced business practices. Explore the feasibility of an E-Commerce Centre for small- and medium-sized enterprises.
- Increase employment in priority sectors by identifying, encouraging and assisting priority firms. Promote participation by Saskatchewan companies in trade and export activities.
- Continue to provide the department with intelligence on regional economic developments, issues and support services.

For more information, contact:

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Business Development Unit

The Business Development Unit works to enhance the growth and diversification of the manufacturing, processing and service exporting sectors of the economy. The unit was organized by priority sub-sector with each business development manager being responsible for one or more sub-sectors. The unit identifies areas for growth, expansion and investment, and participates with other partners in the development of industry-enhancing projects, related support infrastructure and innovative services for value-added and knowledge-based businesses and co-operatives. The unit also leads provincial investment attraction and procurement initiatives.

The unit accomplishes its goals by:

- providing business counselling to local and out-of-province firms considering investment in Saskatchewan.
- providing the department and its business clients with specialized sectoral intelligence.
- working with the other department units and divisions and other departments, agencies and stakeholders to formulate and execute industrial sector development strategies.
- providing strategic procurement support to industry to expand and diversify the existing manufacturing base.
- working with government, industry and academic partners to facilitate new research and development and support infrastructure.
- providing specialized pathfinding services to industry clients.
- providing management counselling to local firms on quality, productivity, marketing, strategic business planning, best manufacturing practices, new technology and innovative production techniques/processes.
- assisting companies to address their standardization needs/issues, including meeting regulatory requirements of foreign markets and product certification schemes.
- providing liaison and third-party mediatory services between industry and other government departments/agencies to resolve issues affecting business growth and expansion.
- working with federal and provincial governments to effectively deal with standardization issues to support trade.

2000-01 Achievements

Major achievements of the Business Development Unit in 2000-01 are grouped under four categories: investment attraction, infrastructure development, industrial development and client service.

Investment Attraction

Through the unit's investment attraction and procurement initiatives, several projects came to fruition during the year:

- Staples/Quill, a large US-based office supplies company, made its decision to establish a new 600-person call centre in Regina. Staff facilitated location selection, human resource requirements and general business services.
- Schulte Industries Ltd. from Englefeld was acquired by the Texas-based Alamo Group. Alamo announced the company will be remaining in Englefeld and plans to expand and hire additional staff in the new year.

- direcTEL officially opened its new 225-person call centre in Saskatoon.
- Nexans doubled capacity of its electrical cable manufacturing plant in Weyburn by adding a second extrusion line. The company will add 65 new jobs producing cable primarily for export to the USA.
- Centennial Food Corp. of Calgary announced it will establish a $34.4-million world-class food processing plant in Saskatoon that will employ up to 190 people. The company produces frozen meat, vegetable and seafood products under its own brand names and under private label for major supermarkets.
- FarmGro Organic Foods Inc. began production at its $12-million flour milling and grains processing plant near Regina. The company has a capacity to mill about 16,000 tonnes of organically grown grains and is a significant player in this emerging industry.
- Hanson Lake Sand Corporation established a new silica sand plant at Hanson Lake. The company produces frac sand for the oil and gas industry.

Infrastructure Development

In this area, unit staff:

- co-ordinated stakeholders and efforts, which led to the signing of a four-year Annaheim access road rebuilding agreement between the village of Annaheim, the Rural Municipality of St. Peters, Doepker Industries and the Department of Highways and Transportation.
- secured a commitment from Bombardier to come on board as the major corporate sponsor for the 2002 Western Aerospace Conference proposed for Saskatoon.
- completed due diligence and technical analysis of more than 50 applications for the Strategic Investment Fund and worked with other branches to establish contracts for those that were approved. These included: an upgrade of SRNet's capabilities and connection to the national research network, a feasibility study for a prototype machinery development centre, feasibility of establishing an all-weather vehicle test track that would offer the capability to perform various durability testing services, and the development of a transistor using a DNA molecule surrounding a string of metal ions.
- assisted the University of Regina in obtaining funding for equipment to enhance the R&D capability in green chemistry.
- worked with the City of Regina and Natural Resources Canada on a proposed district energy project.
- assisted in the ongoing development of the Food Industry Development Centre located at the University of Saskatchewan.
- provided assistance and guidance to the Saskatchewan Food Processors Association to fulfil its objectives of developing the capabilities of food processors in the province.
- provided guidance to the Saskatchewan Agrivision Corporation, whose objective is to increase value-added processing in the province.
- worked as a resource to the Agri-Value Sub-Committee of the Action Committee on the Rural Economy (ACRE).
- worked with the Apparel and Textile Association of Saskatchewan to deliver training programs and technology to the industry.
- in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, developed a framework and recommendations for the federal government's consideration regarding the negotiation and entry into government to government trade-related Mutual Recognition Agreements.
- assisted Western Economic Diversification Canada and the chosen consultant in the development of a research study paper focused on standardization in emerging biodiverse industries (agriculture) in Western Canada.

Industrial Development

In the area of industrial development, the unit:

- in collaboration with institution partners, facilitated technical missions to the National Plastics Exposition and national research facilities and workshops on green chemistry.
- worked with General Motors (GM) Defense to ensure that Saskatchewan suppliers of goods and services were included in its proposal to the USA Army in its $4-billion procurement of armoured vehicles.
- assisted the Saskatchewan Advanced Technology Association to acquire funding to enable the cataloging of Canadian Light Source requirements and corresponding provincial industry capabilities.

- chaired and provided co-ordination support to an industry/government corporate procurement committee, whose mandate is to develop quality, competitive Saskatchewan suppliers of goods and services. The products and/or services of over 20 companies were showcased to 19 of the province's largest corporate purchasers.
- planned, co-ordinated and delivered workshops in partnership with others on entrepreneurialism and best practices, lean manufacturing and synchrotron-related technologies.
- worked with the Department of National Defence (DND) to ensure the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) was engaged to provide policing action on the Light Armoured Vehicle Wheeled project during evaluation trials at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in the USA.
- provided industrial benefit analysis to Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management and Crown Investments Corporation regarding the potential to procure water-scooping aircraft.
- arranged for PAMI to provide testing and evaluation services to GM Defense on its military vehicles.
- worked with DND on a large number of projects and the role that could be played by Saskatchewan suppliers of goods and services.
- co-ordinated a number of corporate missions including participation by 13 Saskatchewan companies to showcase their products at the Alberta Gift Show and gain education on product commercialization.
- supported the Saskatchewan Herb and Spice Association, which organized an international herb and spice conference in Saskatoon along with Herbfest, an outdoor exhibition of the herb industry in Outlook.
- provided advice to Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food as part of its organic opportunity team. This entailed assisting the industry in addressing accreditation and certification needs for products derived from organic agriculture in efforts to maintain market access.

Client Service

During the reporting period, unit staff:

- provided guidance and support to various industry associations in the province's key industry sectors, and advanced a range of industry-related concerns and issues through government.
- maintained and administered the Saskatchewan Made Program, the Saskatchewan Manufacturers Guide, the Major Projects Inventory, the Saskatchewan Suppliers Capability Guide (which focuses on strategic procurement on federal government projects) and other sectoral databases.
- provided professional advice to Saskatchewan companies on quality management and standards-related matters, including technical requirements, testing, certification and registration, business planning and financing, location selection and alliances/partnerships.
- articulated positions on standards at various national and international forums, and actively participated in the National Standards System through membership on various committees and working groups including the Provincial and Territorial Advisory Committee of the Standards Council of Canada.
- facilitated Consumers' Co-operative Refineries and Matrix Chemicals to access employee training program for their business expansions.
- provided advisory services to clients on government incentive programs; export regulations, tariffs and markets; supplier development; and venture capital.
- maintained a wide array of detailed promotional information on Saskatchewan and provided this information to companies enquiring about Saskatchewan as well as to industry associations, other government departments and other governments.
- provided input into the Canadian Defence Industries Association annual Almanac to ensure Saskatchewan representation of manufacturers and service providers.

2001-02 Unit Objectives

- Enhance promotion of Saskatchewan as a location for outside investment. Profile selected sectors and industries from a world perspective, identify investment attraction opportunities within respective industries and proactively pursue these opportunities.
- Update strategic sector plans in co-operation with Policy Division and other agencies to promote industry development, diversification and growth.

- Identify strategic research and development opportunities and their potential for commercialization, technology transfer or other support services.
- Organize major training events and/or other collaborative projects to enhance the technical and managerial skills and competitiveness of businesses in Saskatchewan's value-added and knowledge-based sectors.
- Enhance working relationships with other related branches, departments and agencies across all levels of governments in order to clarify roles, avoid duplication of efforts and maximize resources in support of key sectors and projects.
- Assist Saskatchewan companies to access federal and provincial procurement opportunities by maintaining effective government-to-government liaison.
- Promote participation by Saskatchewan companies in trade and export activities, and liaise with provincial federal trade officials to enhance awareness of all trade initiatives, programs, missions, trade shows and delegations that may be of interest to companies in each sector.
- Assist companies in the apparel and textile industry to engage new technologies and manufacturing processes to increase productivity and promote expansion.
- Work to attract US-based call centres to Saskatchewan.
- Continue to promote the Uniquely Prairies program to allow companies to attend the Edmonton Gift Show and commercialize their products.
- Identify strategic research and development opportunities and their potential for commercialization, technology transfer or other support services.
- Promote the use of the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre to companies inside and out of province. The objective is to strengthen and expand the capabilities of Saskatchewan processors and to attract firms to this province through use of this centre.
- Maintain a base of promotional information on the department's Web site on Saskatchewan and the advantages of manufacturing or processing from a Saskatchewan location.
- Work with other provincial and federal government departments to develop a policy/strategic framework to deal with key issues related to market access for products derived from organic agriculture.

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Saskatchewan Business Development Office, Ottawa

The Saskatchewan Business Development Office will continue the work already underway in federal government initiatives in peacekeeping, and security and defence. These include the following projects: Radarsat-2, Light Utility Vehicle Wheeled, Maritime Helicopter Program, and the Afloat Logistics Sealift Capability. Additionally, the office will focus its attention on opportunities for investment. This could include: company contacts, site visits, and information exchange and will include closer contact with federal agencies that have investment attraction as part of their mandates.

The Ottawa office will expand its efforts to promote the Canadian Light Source (Synchrotron) facility and will work with CLS staff to identify markets, business development and investment opportunities.

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Strategic Initiatives Branch

The Strategic Initiatives Branch became fully staffed and functional in September 2000. It undertakes high-priority projects requiring focused activity and a definable outcome. Projects are usually strictly confidential and intra-/inter-sectoral in nature and require consultation and/or negotiations with senior government and industry representatives to reach a successful conclusion.

The branch's role is to provide leadership and positive resolution on controversial issues and high-priority projects. The branch accomplishes its goals by:

- identifying viable economic development projects that meet the *Partnership for Prosperity* criteria.
- leading consultations and/or negotiations with private sector, stakeholder groups and other government departments/agencies on high-priority economic development projects.
- ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged in the consultation and negotiations of the project.
- managing the co-ordination and dissemination of all information on projects to appropriate parties.
- working with industry and stakeholder groups to resolve issues that may impede business development or new economic development opportunities.
- liaising with industry officials, business associations and other stakeholder groups on economic development and business related issues.

Branch highlights during the reporting period included:

- work on development of a provincial ethanol strategy.
- work on development and finalization of a business plan for a proposed provincial forest centre.
- finalization of a department strategy for investment attraction.
- continued development of the Canadian Light Source (CLS) synchrotron project in co-operation with the University of Saskatchewan, Canadian Light Source Inc., Western Economic Diversification Canada and other stakeholders.
- attraction of additional investment in the CLS in co-operation with project stakeholders – the Provinces of Alberta and Ontario, GlaxoSmithKline and Boehringer Ingelheim made major financial commitments during 2000-01.

2001-02 Branch Objectives

- Continue work on high-priority projects assigned to the department and bring them to successful conclusions.
- Enhance working relationships with other related branches, departments and agencies across all levels of governments in order to clarify roles, avoid duplication of efforts and maximize resources in support of key projects.
- Promote effective and efficient work relationships within the department in order to bring the most knowledgeable resources to work with the branch on specific projects.

For more information, contact:

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Investment and Corporate Services Division

This division co-ordinates the work of most of the department's service areas and consists of four branches: Investment Services, Economic Investments, Financial and Administrative Services, and Information System Services.

Investment Services

The goal of the Investment Services Branch is to promote the development and growth of Saskatchewan businesses in ways designed to increase their equity financing from the community, employees or other individuals, and to create and maintain jobs.

In pursuing this goal, the branch is responsible for administering various activities including the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation Program, Business Immigration Programs, the Small Business Loans Association Program and the Saskatchewan Business Ambassadors Program.

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program

The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations (LSVCC) Program has three streams:

- Employee Investment – Employees are encouraged to invest in their firms. An employee-controlled investment fund is established, allowing employees to invest into the fund and then receive provincial tax credits of 20 per cent on investments of up to $5,000 and federal tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $5,000. The fund then invests in the employer company for use in its business operations.
- Provincial Pool Funds – These funds encourage Saskatchewan residents to make equity investments into small- and medium-sized Saskatchewan-based businesses. Through labour associations, broadly based investment corporations are established. These corporations issue shares to Saskatchewan residents then invest those funds in a number of eligible Saskatchewan businesses. Provincial pool funds are governed by provincial legislation. Investors receive provincial tax credits of 20 per cent on investments of up to $5,000 and federal tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $5,000.
- Federal Pool Funds – These funds have the same objective as provincial pool funds. The difference is that the *Canada Income Tax Act* governs federal funds and investors receive provincial tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $3,500 and federal tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $5,000.

Department staff assists all the funds in becoming registered in the province, and issues both the provincial and federal tax credits to the investors.

The objectives of the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program are:

- create and maintain jobs;
- encourage employees to invest in the firms that employ them;
- encourage long term investment in local communities;
- strengthen the provincial economy by providing additional capital for the formation of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses; and
- build lasting and productive relationships among labour, business, and government for the benefit of Saskatchewan.

Key accomplishments for 2000-01 included the following:

- 15 employee funds, two provincial pool funds and three national pool funds were operating under the program.
- Prairie Ventures Fund Inc., a provincial pool fund that did not meet the minimum opening requirements in the previous fiscal year, partnered with Crown Life Insurance Company and raised over $3.8 million.
- Golden Opportunities Fund Inc., another provincial fund, raised over $6.3 million.
- on the federal side, all three national pool funds had a successful selling season by raising $33.5 million. These funds are available for investment in Saskatchewan businesses.
- enhancements were made to enable participants in the program to report sales electronically using a run-time application.

Highlights of activities under the LSVCC Program are shown in the following chart:

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program

Employee Funds	Fiscal 2000-01	Program to Date (April 89-March 01)
Number of Registrants Raising Funds	11	25
Funds Invested in Small Businesses	$434,312	$6,810,841
Amounts on which Tax credits Paid	$632,914	$4,859,502
Provincial Tax Credits Issued	$122,986	$953,154
Jobs Created or Maintained (gross)	168	1204
Provincial Pool Funds		
Funds Raised	$10,342,470	$18,528,160
Number of Investors	3,567	6,447
Number of Investments Made into Eligible Businesses	9	11
Number of Companies Receiving Equity Funding	6	6
Amount of Funds Invested	$1,898,160	$2,438,160
Provincial Tax Credits Issued	$2,050,132	$3,687,270
National Pool Funds		
Funds Raised	$33,590,026	$170,361,769
Number of Investors	11,381	61,539
Investments Made into Eligible Businesses	3	26
Eligible Businesses Receiving Equity Funding	1	12
Amount of Funds Invested	$104,200	$44,875,648
Provincial Tax Credits Issued	$4,679,756	$29,330,723

2001-02 Objectives – LSVCC Program

The department will continue to offer the LSVCC Program and will focus on the following objectives:

- review the LSVCC Program to identify possible program enhancements; and,
- develop and implement a strategy to increase the awareness of the program.

Business Immigration Programs

The goals of the Business Immigration Programs are to attract immigrant entrepreneurs who have specific business skills and experience and immigrants who can fill critical economic skill shortages to enhance economic development in the province. During the year, staff worked with both entrepreneurs coming through the federal Entrepreneur Program and skilled workers and entrepreneurs who were nominated under the Provincial Nominee Program.

Key accomplishments for 2000-01 included:

- negotiating an extension to the Federal/Provincial Agreement on the Provincial Nominee Program, until September 16, 2001.
- expanding the Skill Shortage List under the Provincial Nominee Program.
- participating in one Federal/Provincial Immigration Mission to the United Kingdom and Europe, where staff promoted the Provincial Nominee Program at seminars and trade shows and in print advertisements. Follow-up visits to Saskatchewan by immigrants interested in relocating to Saskatchewan have already occurred.
- arranging for incoming immigrants to meet with sector specialists, regional economic development authorities and the business community to assist with the decision to immigrate.

- participating in a number of federal/provincial working group meetings on selection criteria, the Provincial Nominee Program, and promotion and recruitment during the year in an effort to assist with the development of policy and strategic planning at the federal level.
- participating in provincial consultations on immigration in Saskatchewan to determine the structure of immigration within the province.

Federal and Provincial Immigration Statistics

- **Provincial Nominee Program**

Immigrants Nominated:	48
Businesses Nominated:	4
Skilled Workers Nominated:	44
Visas Issued:	32
Immigrants Landed:	27
Immigrants and Families:	79

- **Federal Business Immigration Program**

Entrepreneur:	27
Investor:	21
Self-employed:	37

Immigrant Investor Program

During the fiscal year, the department continued to monitor and review existing immigrant investor funds still operating under the previous Immigrant Investor Program. A revised Immigrant Investor Program was implemented on April 1, 1999, and featured one Canada Fund (excluding Quebec) that will raise investment from immigrants. These monies will be distributed to participating provinces to be used for economic development purposes. Saskatchewan has chosen not to participate in the new program.

2001-02 Objectives – Business Immigration Programs

As of April 1, 2001, the Provincial Nominee Program and the Immigrant Entrepreneur Program were transferred to the newly formed Immigration Branch of Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs. The branch was created following public consultations on immigration in September 2000, which identified a need for an expanded role for the provincial government in recruiting economic immigrant to Saskatchewan, settlement and integration services, and accreditation issues facing immigrants.

Small Business Loans Association Program

A Small Business Loans Association (SBLA) can be formed by the incorporation of four or more community-based interest groups: individuals, partnerships, co-operatives or corporations. SBLAs operate with a maximum interest-free revolving line of credit of $100,000. The SBLA in turn provides loan advances up to $10,000 to eligible businesses.

The objectives of the SBLA Program are:

- to provide business development opportunities to the non-traditional entrepreneur and to extend financing beyond the scope of traditional lenders to contribute to the success of the small entrepreneur; and
- to promote the growth and diversification of Saskatchewan by involving existing businesses and associations in assisting small start-up or existing businesses in their communities.

The Investment Services Branch is responsible for:

- approving new SBLAs and providing final approval on client loans;
- disbursing funds to the SBLAs to then be disbursed to the small businesses;
- registering loan security appropriately;
- accepting and recording the principal payments from SBLAs on behalf of small businesses; and
- collecting on delinquent loans.

2001-02 Objectives – SBLA Program

The department will continue to offer the SBLA Program and will focus on the following objectives:

- develop and implement a plan to deliver the SBLA Manual/Handbook;
- monitor non-performing loans to ensure delinquency rates remain at an acceptable level;
- review needs of SBLAs and small business loan clients to identify possible program enhancements; and,
- continue to recognize SBLAs that have reached job creation milestones.

During the reporting year, the following program activity occurred:

Small Business Loans Association Program

	2000-01	Program To Date April 1989 – March 2001
Associations Approved	5	351
Active Associations	258	351
Approved Client Loans	598	7260
Dollar Value of Approved Client Loans	$4,300,147	$35,591,777
Client Remittances	$2,899,825	$24,366,352
Total Active Client Loans at the End of the Year	2,043	2,043
Dollar Value of Active Client Loans at the End of the Year	$9,150,300	$9,150,300
Jobs Created	573	8,259
Jobs Maintained	641	7,555
New Businesses Created	247	3,575

Saskatchewan Business Ambassadors Program

The Saskatchewan Business Ambassadors Program is designed with two primary objectives in mind:

- to promote a consistently positive image of Saskatchewan to potential businesses both within and outside the province; and
- to encourage and promote a spirit of optimism among people within the province.

The program enlists the help of business people in promoting the province. These business ambassadors are equipped with promotional materials to inform their business contacts about the strong and growing economy and plentiful business opportunities Saskatchewan has to offer.

To help share the story of Saskatchewan's success, the ambassador promotional kit includes print information on the economy and key economic sectors, regional profile cards, lapel pins, and a CD-ROM or video with information about Saskatchewan.

Through the Saskatchewan Business Ambassadors Program, the government is working in partnership with the business community to share the story of Saskatchewan's success with the world.

Key accomplishments for 2000-01 included:

- completing a random survey by contacting existing Saskatchewan Business Ambassadors to determine the value of the program and its material.
- updating print material, video and CD-ROM for printing and development.

2001-02 Objectives – Saskatchewan Business Ambassadors Program

The department will continue to offer the Saskatchewan Business Ambassadors Program and will focus on the following objectives:

- Fully implement a reporting and tracking system to follow up with both ambassadors and recipients.
- Continue to explore options for promotion of program material within and outside the province, including trade shows and conventions.
- Work with chambers of commerce and Regional Economic Development Authorities to promote the program.

For more information, contact:

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Economic Investments

The goal of the Economic Investments Branch is to help build the province's economy through innovation, research and development, and the adaptation of technologies, as well as to ensure that feedback is obtained from the youth of the province on economic initiatives that affect young people.

In pursuing this goal, the branch is responsible for administering the Strategic Investment Fund, the Innovation and Science Fund, the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement and the Youth Provincial Action Committee on the Economy.

The Strategic Investment Fund

The administration of the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF), originally called the Strategic Initiatives Fund, was transferred to Investment and Corporate Services from the Policy Division effective April 1, 2000.

The fund supports research and development infrastructure and activities that will create new technologies, new products, new business opportunities and new economic activities. Support is targeted at the development of technologies required for Saskatchewan industries to remain efficient and competitive and at the development of technologies that will lead to new higher value products, processes and uses for Saskatchewan products.

During the reporting period, a Request for Proposals was issued for applications under the fund. These applications were evaluated and ranked on the following criteria: economic impact assessment, industry support, financial viability, project feasibility, and availability of other public funds.

Key accomplishments for 2000-01 included:

- developing criteria and procedures used in the request for proposals process to allocate funding under the program.
- providing a total of $5.9 million of funding to various projects.
- committing $3 million of the funding through previously approved projects, which included applied research in telecommunications and information technology, and research activities at the Canadian Light Source facility.
- providing approximately $2.8 million to new projects through the request for proposals process in the 2000-01 fiscal year. Examples of approved projects included:
  - research on a bacterial/genetic analytical detection system for contaminated soils;
  - research to develop a transistor using a DNA molecule;
  - research to obtain chemical and isotope fingerprint analysis on a large collection of brines from the subsurface of soil;
  - purchase of a high-resolution mass spectrometer for proteomics;
  - research and development of green ionic chemistry.

2001-02 Objectives – Strategic Investment Fund

- Review and revise the criteria for the fund for potential enhancements and to ensure it is aligned with departmental priorities and the new provincial economic strategy.
- Review current contract and approval procedures to obtain efficiencies of administration.

Innovation and Science Fund

The Innovation and Science Fund was introduced in 2000-01 to provide funding to Saskatchewan universities, colleges and research institutes in support of projects receiving approval and funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), the Canada Research Chairs (CRC), the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF), and the provincial portion of the Medical Research Council Regional Partnership Program (MRCRPP).

The fund is meant to complement existing provincial research programs and funding mechanisms and, as such, is focused solely on the research activities and capacities of Saskatchewan's publicly funded academic and research institutions.

The Innovation and Science Fund is designed to:

- promote excellence in research at Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and associated non-profit research institutes;
- promote research and development partnerships among post-secondary institutions, governments and the private sector;
- lever federal research funding for Saskatchewan by ensuring that provincial institutions are able to effectively compete in national research funding competitions;
- improve the province's ability to attract and retain high quality scientists and researchers;

- promote economic growth and quality of life through innovation and research; and
- develop Saskatchewan's human capital and innovative capacity.

Key accomplishments for 2000-01 included:

- providing more than $10 million in funding for 12 projects. Examples of these projects include:
  - additional support to the universities for the Canada Research Chairs Program;
  - capital to conduct subatomic physics research;
  - capital to conduct a study on rural and remote nursing practices;
  - capital to conduct biomolecular research; and
  - support for the Medical Research Council Regional Partnership Program.

2001-02 Objectives – Innovation and Science Fund

- Review the program for the potential of aligning it more closely with the province's research and development strategy once it is approved.
- In conjunction with Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, Saskatchewan Health and the two universities, determine the funding priorities for the program for 2001-02.
- Work with the universities and other department staff to streamline the process for contract development and provision of funding under the program.

Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA)

As of April 1, 2000, responsibility for the management and implementation of the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA) was transferred from the Policy Division. WEPA is a four-year, $40-million fund designed to help build the province's capacity for economic growth through innovation. Signed in July 1998, the agreement is administered by the department for the provincial government and Western Economic Diversification Canada for the federal government.

WEPA provides funding for projects that significantly increase Saskatchewan's innovative capacity in economic infrastructure, tourism, export and marketing, and rural and northern economic development.

Key accomplishments for 2000-01 included the following:

- An interim evaluation was carried out on the WEPA, examining issues such as the rationale for the agreement and the efficiency of administration. The evaluation proposed a number of items for consideration in the creation of future programs of this sort.
- During the year, 12 projects were approved for $5,434,290 in commitments. A total of $2,034,972 was disbursed during 2000-01. Examples of initiatives were:
  - $2.83 million was approved for the $5.66-million Greenhouse Gas Technology Centre to be located at the Regina Research Park;
  - $80,000 was approved for the $2.1-million WestLink Technology Commercialization Internship program to train business and technology professionals and provide hands-on experience in the field of commercialization of early-stage technologies in Saskatchewan;
  - $335,000 was approved for the upgrading and exhibition enhancement at the Duck Lake Historical Museum; and
  - $407,000 was approved for implementation of the Saskatchewan Bird Trail Strategy including initiatives such as interpretive signage, site upgrading, expansion of the Chaplin Nature Centre and indoor and outdoor displays at Chaplin and Wynyard Nature Centres.

2001-02 Objectives – WEPA

- Allocate the remaining WEPA funds, amounting to approximately $2 million, to projects that meet the objectives and criteria of the WEPA.
- Negotiate with the federal government the terms and conditions of a new agreement to replace the existing agreement, which expires during 2001-02.
- Manage ongoing administration of WEPA, including disbursement of approximately $6 million in funds to more than 30 projects approved to date.

Youth Provincial Action Committee on the Economy (Youth PACE)

The committee acts as an advisory body to the Ministers of Economic and Co-operative Development and Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, providing feedback and recommendations on economic initiatives and training programs for young people.

Youth PACE is a volunteer board with balanced representation from across the province for a one-year renewable term. The membership consists of youth between the ages of 18 and 28. Members represent a wide range of target areas, such as youth currently in post-secondary institutions; recent graduates; youth employed in public and private sectors; agricultural and co-operative sectors; youth entrepreneurs; male and female; Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal; and disabled.

Key accomplishments for 2000-01 included:

- Appointment of a new membership for the committee in January 2001.
- Members involved in the initial meeting to discuss the provincial economic strategy were asked to participate in a conference call for an update on the progress of the economic strategy and to once again provide feedback and comments.

2001-02 Objectives - Youth PACE

- Committee meets to discuss the Aboriginal Education and Training Action Plan.
- Review the process for renewing membership to the committee.
- Renew membership of the committee in January 2002.

For more information, contact:

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Financial and Administrative Services

Financial and Administrative Services provides general operating, financial and legislative services to the department and to the Office of Northern Affairs. The key activities of the branch include:

- Co-ordinating the preparation of the department's budget to ensure that priorities receive funding, and liaison and negotiation with Treasury Board.
- Processing revenue and expenditures including appropriation control, contract administration and ensuring appropriate legislative authority for payments made.
- Conducting financial analysis and consolidation of the department's monthly expenditure forecast.
- Providing general administrative and financial support to ensure successful implementation of the department initiatives.
- Providing quality legislative services to the department in a timely manner.
- Providing access to information in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

Key accomplishments of the branch in 2000-01 included the following:

- The branch set timelines for all measurable processes, which included: supplier payment and revenue processing, quarterly reports, year-end schedules and reports, legislative document processing and inquiry response times. Timeline targets were met and often exceeded.
- A new Windows-based Budget/Forecast system was successfully implemented in fall 2000. This new system provided managers with the tools for accurate and timely forecasting and reporting.
- Processes were identified that could be streamlined by utilizing the Intranet, i.e. travel expense claims and other administrative forms and processes. Also, options were explored to address managers' financial information and reporting needs.

2001-02 Branch Objectives

- Expand the reporting capabilities of the Budget/Forecast system to include financial reporting on departmental strategic planning initiatives.
- Once the department's Intranet is established, streamline processes that can be migrated to the Intranet.
- Develop and implement a Security Charter, in conjunction with Information Systems Services Branch, with a goal to improve all aspects of security across the department.
- Conduct reviews of department expenditure decisions for value for money.
- Review internal department support processes for enhancements and efficiencies.

For more information, contact:

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Information Systems Services

The goals of the Information Systems Services Branch are to:

- lead the department in the development of a well-managed corporate Information Technology/Information Management (IT/IM) environment that will strengthen the department's ability to efficiently deliver information and services; and
- direct the planning, development, implementation and support of IT systems and computer services for the department.

In 2000-01 the branch:

- Implemented a department networking project that connected the Minister's Office and all regional offices to Head Office to improve access to information and allow all employees to have access to corporate systems.
- Implemented a new financial management system for the purposes of improving the department's fiscal management capabilities.
- Developed Phase I of a corporate client management system to enable the department to maintain consistent and accurate client information.
- Developed and implemented a purchase-entry system for use by all Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations to electronically submit purchase information for tax credit issuance.
- Developed a departmental Information Technology (IT) Strategic Plan to be incorporated into overall strategic planning.
- Installed a database server, CD-ROM server, Intranet server and numerous hardware and peripheral upgrades.

Information Systems Services Branch staff represented the department on several government-wide committees which dealt with a variety of IT issues.

2001-02 Branch Objectives

- Increase access to high-speed communications capacity by participating in CommunityNet.
- Begin transferring forms for online access and automating services for online delivery to meet targets specified in the e-government strategy.
- Continue with the development and implementation of an enterprise Information Technology Architecture that will facilitate the conversion to e-government practices.
- Develop a department IT Security Policy.
- Enhance and maintain departmental networks and database applications considered to be essential tools for the department and its customers.

For more information, contact:

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Information Technology Office

Operating under the leadership of the Chief Information Officer for Saskatchewan, the Information Technology Office (ITO) establishes and co-ordinates policies and programs that use information technology to enhance public access, strengthen the government's ability to undertake electronic service delivery and enable electronic commerce throughout the province.

Working with, and reporting to a Deputy Ministers' Steering Committee on Information Technology, the ITO developed and implemented a co-management model for IT in government to ensure efficiency and co-ordination among government departments and agencies.

During 2000-01, the Information Technology Office was involved in:

- planning, consultation and development of the province's CommunityNet initiative, which will provide high-speed Internet access in educational institutions, health facilities and government offices in 366 communities, including rural and remote northern towns and villages;
- developing and launching an expanded central Web portal for the Government of Saskatchewan, which has received millions of hits and generated thousands of public inquiries;
- managing the response to thousands of e-mail inquiries received through the Government of Saskatchewan central Web portal;
- developing and adopting an e-government strategy to guide and facilitate the development of the government's electronic service delivery capacity and other IT-related initiatives;
- researching and cataloging transactions that occur between citizens and the Government of Saskatchewan, in order to establish a benchmark for achieving the province's goal of having 90 per cent of government/citizen transactions available online by 2004;
- leading the Canada-wide Public Sector Chief Information Officers Council's information management initiative, including the council's Information Management Working Group, which developed a National Information Management Framework that includes key elements of creation, organization, use and preservation of information;
- developing a Security Charter to guide the protection and privacy of all information handled by government, particularly sensitive information pertaining to private citizens;
- administering a Pathfinder Fund aimed at expanding the government's electronic and Web-based services to the public;
- establishing a Government Online (GOL) Fund and GOL Committee to assist departments and agencies in achieving the electronic service delivery goals outlined in the province's e-government strategy;
- partnering with Statistics Canada to host a major e-government seminar aimed at encouraging the use of the Internet as a public service delivery tool; and
- developing and publishing an internal monthly e-mail-based newsletter, which is aimed at sharing information technology related developments, policies and information among government personnel.

2001-02 Objectives

- Implement the CommunityNet high-speed Internet initiative, connecting more than 700 facilities in 150 communities in the first year of the three-year roll out plan for the project.
- Explore options for expanding the high-speed Internet capabilities of CommunityNet to more facilities and more communities throughout the province.
- Work with government departments and agencies through the Government Online Committee to improve public access to government services by expanding electronic service delivery using the Internet and other available technologies.
- Develop an information management strategy aimed at organizing, maintaining and making accessible information to government employees that is crucial to their daily work.
- Continue to foster an environment that will lead to the expansion of electronic commerce in Saskatchewan, in order to strengthen government's ability to use information and information technology to enhance the efficiency of government operations, and to assist Saskatchewan citizens in adapting to a global, information-based economy.
- Continue to improve the effectiveness of the Government of Saskatchewan central Web portal as an information and service delivery mechanism to the public.
- Continue to improve the security and privacy of all information handled by the Government of Saskatchewan by working with, and chairing, the provincial Security Charter Group and National Chief Information Officer's Sub-committee on Information Protection.
- Work with provincial government departments and agencies to achieve the goal outlined in the province's e-government strategy of providing the option to citizens to access all government forms online by 2002.

For more information, contact:

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Marketing and Corporate Resources

The Marketing and Corporate Resources Division is responsible for the strategic communications, promotion and marketing activities of the department. The division provides leadership on communications issues and supports government marketing efforts to encourage entrepreneurship and to attract businesses, industries and investment to Saskatchewan, The division co-ordinates departmental strategic planning and manages the department's human resource needs.

The division consists of four branches: Public Affairs, Marketing, Planning and Research, and Human Resources.

The 2000-01 communications goals of the division included:

- providing appropriate and useful economic information in response to identified needs.
- promoting growth businesses and opportunities, both within and beyond Saskatchewan's borders.
- providing business development and investment attraction information.
- providing opportunities for events to promote program and economic successes.
- promoting an image of Saskatchewan that portrays it as innovative and growth-oriented.

The activity level in the division continued to be high and involved co-ordination with private businesses, other departments and other levels of government. Communications activities for 2000-01 fell into four broad areas in support of division goals:

Creating Economic Confidence

The division worked to develop confidence in Saskatchewan's economy by:

- producing and distributing quarterly editions of *Business Unlimited*, an insert in *Saskatchewan Business* magazine.
- publishing the monthly *Saskatchewan Economic News (SEN)* to provide news about economic indicators and significant economic development projects across the province.
- organizing, co-ordinating and advising on more than 70 public events to profile economic success stories in the private and public sectors.
- providing major communications support on the *Partnership for Prosperity* consultation document and co-ordinating public consultations on the document held in the fall of the reporting period (support included event organization, speeches and an advertising campaign around the consultations).
- undertaking development of, and initial production on, *The Saskatchewan Dream*, a radio and television campaign promoting Saskatchewan business success stories and involving private sector and media partners (the campaign would be formally launched in the following fiscal year).
- writing approximately 140 speeches for the premier, minister and designates to deliver to stakeholders.
- writing more than 60 news releases and feature stories on department programs and initiatives in the private and public sectors.
- developing strategies to communicate news on Saskatchewan economic strengths to the province's business community and the public.
- preparing a monthly "how-to" business column, *Economy Matters*, for Saskatchewan weekly newspapers.
- providing information and support for hundreds of media inquiries and undertaking media relations on economic initiatives and issues.

Image and Investment Promotion

The division continued to promote Saskatchewan's economic renewal, growth prospects and investment opportunities among business and opinion leaders both within and outside the province. Activities included:

- developing advertising promoting Saskatchewan's forestry, advanced technology and agri-value sectors, using placements in Saskatchewan newspapers and out-of-province specialty/trade publications.
- conducting extensive discussions with economic development stakeholders to gather advice on developing a distinct "brand" for Saskatchewan.
- developing a business direct-mail campaign targeted to national and international companies that have manufacturing and/or processing facilities in the province.
- developing new marketing materials, such as brochures and fact sheets and refreshing the look of existing materials.
- preparing feature articles and editorial/ photographic material on the Saskatchewan economy and its sectors for various trade and business publications.

- providing communications support at trade shows, including the Prospectors & Developers Mining Millennium in Toronto and the Herb and Spice International Conference in Outlook.
- providing communications support to trade missions led by the minister and co-ordinated by Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP).
- producing articles and feature stories for various in-province publications.
- co-ordinating promotional activities around various special weeks including Co-operatives Week, Small Business Week and REDA Week.
- handling inquiries from the public and preparing promotional packages on varied requests for information on economic development opportunities in Saskatchewan.

Supporting Department Programs and Initiatives

The division increased awareness of department programs and initiatives through production and distribution of print materials and selective use of advertising. Staff co-ordinated design and procurement of exhibit and promotion items, and provided general support to department and ministerial participation in trade shows, trade missions and special events.

Main activities during the reporting period included:

- publishing program fact sheets and co-operative development guides, small business handouts, corporate brochures and other publications, including brochure material around the *Partnership for Prosperity* consultations.
- providing communications and marketing support to the *Connectivity* conference.
- providing general marketing support for the Provincial Nominee Program, including producing brochures and trade show materials for the Emigrate 2001 show in London, England.

Accountability and Issues Identification

A major role continued to be the identification of issues and the development of strategic communications plans to address them.

During the reporting period, the division:

- prepared communications strategies for major department projects and for Cabinet Decision Items (CDIs).
- undertook the department's "House Business" responsibilities, providing information to the Legislative Assembly in response to oral and written questions.
- monitored newspapers for stories and issues related to department programs and initiatives.
- produced the department's 1999-2000 annual report.

A major new responsibility in 2000-01 was responsibility for departmental strategic planning, including development of performance measures for organizational initiatives. Once the performance measures are refined, they will assist the department to better align its resources with overall strategic direction and with the needs of its client base.

2001-02 Communications Objectives

- Improve the perception within the province of Saskatchewan as a place of opportunity.
- Contribute to a positive awareness of Saskatchewan and its economic opportunities outside the province.
- Promote the province's innovative and knowledge-based economy through initiatives related to e-government, research and development, adoption of new technologies and advances in key economic sectors.
- Promote Aboriginal economic successes.
- Promote the services of REDAs and other community economic development organizations.
- Continue to create awareness of department programs and services available to assist business development.
- Build public understanding of the province's economic strategy.
- Use stakeholder relations and targeted communications on business successes to promote a spirit of entrepreneurship among Saskatchewan residents.
- Work towards a common "branding" of Saskatchewan.
- Develop more information vehicles to communicate positive economic news to businesses and residents.

- Contribute to the government online initiative by delivering department programs and services online.
- Refresh the department's Web site and develop a companion site for business interests.

For more information, contact:

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Human Resources

Human Resources works collaboratively with managers and employees to provide proactive and leading edge human resource management strategies that support the achievement of department goals.

During fiscal 2000-01, Human Resources:

- Developed a Human Resource Plan as part of overall department strategic planning.
- Began work on and obtained approval from Executive Management Committee to develop an overall organizational development strategy that addresses business and employee needs and is aligned with the departmental strategic goals. Five initiatives of the organizational development strategy are:
  - development of a Management Succession Plan;
  - identification of competencies required; identification of gaps and a plan to address competency gaps;
  - completion of a Learning and Development Strategy;
  - development of an Employee Recognition Program; and
  - development of a Recruitment and Retention Strategy.
- Provided leadership to the departmental Employment Equity (EE) Committee to achieve diversity within the department.
  - initiated partnerships with five community agencies to access designated group candidates;
  - held EE workshop for senior management facilitated by Trevor Wilson, Canada's leading consultant specializing in diversity management and employment equity. Mr. Wilson is President of TWI Inc.; and
  - initiated EE term pilot.
- Provided leadership to the departmental Occupational Health and Safety committee to ensure health and safety within the workplace.
- Provided support to the departmental Union/ Management Committee to build stronger Union/Management partnerships.

2001-02 Objectives

In addition to progressing on the five organizational development initiatives above:

- Provide support to managers and employees through the scope transition period with respect to job classification and other priorities.
- Ensure employees are able to balance work and family through education and awareness of options in place.
- Create a positive working environment with no systemic barriers:
  - to ensure designated groups are available to recruit from, increase partnerships with community agencies (South Saskatchewan Independent Living Centre, First Nations Employment Centre, Missouri Coteau Development Corporation, Regina Open Door Society and Women of the Dawn) from five to ten agencies; and
  - extend the EE term pilot for a second year.
- Implement a departmental training policy.
- Implement an Employee Recognition Program.

For more information, contact:

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Financial Report (Budgetary Expenditure)

Appropriation and Expenditure by Subvote and Subprogram

(Shaded totals correspond to the 2000-01 Public Accounts, Volume 2)

	Original Estimate 2000-01 ($000's)	Revised Estimate 2000-01 ($000's)	Actual 2000-01 ($000's)
EC01 Administration Total	**$ 2,071**	**$ 2,221**	**$ 2,219**
EC02 Accommodation and Central Services Total	**$ 2,025**	**$ 2,025**	**$ 2,019**
Business and Community Economic Development			
Regional Development	$ 1,705	$ 1,935	$ 1,935
Regional Economic Development Authorities and Organizations	2,800	2,600	2,568
Program Development and Support	1,574	1,584	1,583
Business Development	1,728	1,943	1,936
Marketing and Corporate Affairs	1,189	1,594	1,578
EC05 Business and Community Economic Development Total	**$ 8,996**	**$ 9,656**	**$ 9,600**
Business Investment Programs			
Strategic Initiatives Fund	$ 5,925	$ 19,925	$ 19,893
Innovation and Science Fund	10,000	10,200	10,197
Economic Partnership Agreements	3,750	2,710	2,027
Small Business Loans	1,130	1,130	741
EC07 Business Investment Programs Total	**$ 20,805**	**$ 33,965**	**$ 32,858**
EC06 Policy Total	**$ 1,243**	**$ 1,243**	**$ 1,213**
EC13 Information Technology Office	**$ 1,333**	**$ 1,333**	**$ 1,247**
EC12 Co-operative Development Total	**$ 725**	**$ 755**	**$ 749**
EC04 Tourism Saskatchewan Total	**$ 6,915**	**$ 6,915**	**$ 6,915**
EC11 Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc. Total	**$ 2,591**	**$ 2,591**	**$ 2,591**
Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Transfers			
Investments Division Total	$ 1,495	$ 1,495	$ 1,495
Research Parks Division Total	4,391	4,391	4,391
Investment Loan Loss Contribution	2,000	2,444	2,443
EC09 Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Total	**$ 7,886**	**$ 8,330**	**$ 8,329**
Office of Northern Affairs			
Northern Programs Management	$ 1,560	$ 1,660	$ 1,660
Northern Strategy	245	145	137
Resource and Policy Development	546	546	534
Economic and Community Development Programs	963	963	964
Northern Development Fund	1,730	1,605	1,064
Northern Commercial Fish Transportation Subsidy	305	430	430
EC10 Office of Northern Affairs Total	**$ 5,349**	**$ 5,349**	**$ 4,789**
ECONOMIC AND CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	**$ 59,939**	**$ 74,383**	**$ 72,529**

Legislative Responsibilities

During the reporting period, the Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development was responsible for the following Acts:

The Department of Economic Development Act, 1993

The Act established the Department of Economic Development (the name has since changed to the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development) using standard departmental provisions and provides authority to guide, promote, co-ordinate and implement policies, strategies and programs in support of economic development. *The Small Business Loans Association Program Regulations* are established under this Act.

The Co-operative Guarantee Act

The Act was established in the 1940s to enable the government to assist co-operatives that do not qualify for conventional loans by providing a government guarantee of loans made through an approved lender. The Co-operative Guarantee Board, established by the legislation, did not meet during the reporting year and no applications were received. There are also no outstanding loans.

The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act

The Act and Regulations set the parameters for the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program, including: establishment of Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations, investment of monies, issuance of tax credits and compliance. As well, the Act provides for the issuance of tax credits to federally-registered labour-sponsored venture capital corporations.

The Rural Development Act

The Act, which is jointly administered with Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs and Housing, provides the Minister with the authority to formulate and carry out economic and social programs that benefit persons residing in rural areas. The legislation was transferred when the department received responsibility for the Rural Development Corporation Program; however, this program was wound down at the end of fiscal 1997-98.

The Tourism Authority Act

The Act provides for the establishment of the Saskatchewan Tourism Authority, which is charged with the responsibility to facilitate: the marketing of tourism, the provision of visitor and information services, the education and training of individuals involved in the tourism industry, the planning and development of tourism destination areas, the administration of tourism funding programs (other than capital funding), research and policy development in tourism, public awareness of tourism, and the development and promotion of tourism in Saskatchewan.

Legislative Amendments

During the reporting period, there were no amendments made to legislation governed by Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development.

The following legislation was repealed by the department during the reporting year:

The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Regulatory Reform) Act, 2000 came into force on June 21, 2000. Included in the obsolete statutes that were repealed were:

- *The Small Business Investment Incentives Act*; and
- *The Venture Capital Tax Credit Act*.

No other legislation was introduced or repealed by the department during the reporting year.

Publications

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development distributed the following publications during the reporting year:

Economic Strategy

- *Partnership for Prosperity* – Consultation Document (2000)

Economic Analysis

- Monthly Economic Indicator Report

Regional Economic Development Services

- Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs) White Paper
- REDAs White Paper Phase II
- REDAs: Organization and Funding
- Directory of Business Associations in Saskatchewan (1999)
- *Growing From Within: A Practical Approach to Economic Development* (video)

Co-operative Development

- Continuing the Co-operative Sector and Government Partnership – A Mandate Paper
- Co-operative Development Fact Sheets (ongoing series currently with 11 titles)
- *Building the New Saskatchewan* – New Generation Co-operatives For Agricultural Processing and Value-Added Projects: A Development Guide
- The Social and Economic Importance of the Co-operative Sector in Saskatchewan (1998)
- Co-operative Development Assistance Program fact sheet
- Developing and Supporting Saskatchewan Co-operatives: A Directors Handbook

Business Services

- Business Information Resource Materials (72 titles)
- Kinds of Business – (48 titles) – Fall 1999
- Information Bulletins (16 titles)

Economic Diversification

- Saskatchewan Manufacturers Guide (on Web site)
- Major Projects Inventory (on Web site)
- Directory of Professional Consultants in Saskatchewan (1998)
- Private Sector Purchasers (1996)

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program (LSVCC)

- LSVCC Employee Funds Type B fact sheet
- LSVCC Pool Funds Type A fact sheet
- LSVCC Brochure

Small Business Loans Associations Program

- Mandate and Criteria

Strategic Investments Fund

- Mandate, criteria and application (available on department Web site)

Innovation and Science Fund

- Mandate, criteria and application (available on department Web site)

Canada/Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA)

- Mandate and criteria

Investment Attraction

- Saskatchewan Success Through Innovation out-of-province marketing kit
  - Overview brochure
  - Sector-specific fact sheets – agricultural biotechnology, agricultural equipment, call centres, Canadian Light Source Inc., cultural industries, food and beverage processing, forestry, health sciences, information technology, mining, oil and gas, pork production, tourism.
  - Saskatchewan fact sheets – about Saskatchewan, locating in Saskatchewan, quality of life.
- Saskatchewan Ambassadors Program kit:
  - Sector brochures
  - CD-ROM
  - Video
- Investors Package (available only upon request)

Other

- Department annual reports
- *Saskatchewan Business Unlimited* quarterly magazine (free by subscription)
- *Saskatchewan Economic News* monthly news summary (free by subscription)
- *Blueprint for Innovation: Entering the 21st Century* (report of the Saskatchewan Steering Committee on Innovation, October 1998)
- *Canadian Light Source – "New Light" for Science and Innovation* (1999)
- Implementation to Address Entrepreneurial Education (Fall 1997)
- E-Government in Saskatchewan

For more information, contact:

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Saskatoon

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Saskatoon, SK S7K 2H6

206 – 15 Innovation Boulevard
Saskatoon, SK S7N 2X8

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Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC)	1-800-667-4374
Northern Business Directory	1-800-663-4065
Northern Development Fund	1-800-663-4065
Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat	1-800-577-2668
Office of Northern Affairs	(306) 425-4200
Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development Regional Offices	1-800-265-2001

Glossary of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations were used in the 2000-01 Annual Report of Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development.

AIT	Agreement on Internal Trade
BREI	Business Retention and Expansion International
BSIB	Business Services Improvement Branch
CCA	Canadian Co-operative Association
CFDC	Community Futures Development Corporation
CFI	Canada Foundation for Innovation
CLS	Canadian Light Source (synchrotron project)
CSBSC	Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre
DND	Department of National Defence
ECAS	Electrical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan
IT	Information Technology
ITO	Information Technology Office
LSVCC	Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation
NDO	Neighbourhood Development Organization
NGC	New Generation Co-operative
PACE	Provincial Action Committee on the Economy
PAMI	Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute
R&D	Research and Development
REDA	Regional Economic Development Authority
SBLA	Small Business Loans Association
SCCD	Saskatchewan Council for Community Development
SEDA	Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOCO	Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation
STEP	Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership
WEPA	Western Economic Partnership Agreement
WGI	Working Group on Investment